

HERNDON, William H.

DRAWER 4 LAWYER HENDON + STUDENT

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# Abraham Lincoln's Law Partners and Students

William H. Herndon

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

the Railroad, and brought to the Saturday evening, and at bandaged hands, scratched on arriving there he had in whose brother he had worked hospitably received him, but murder with his guest. He and went to Mr. Seymour, a affidavit of the facts. He was New York. He acknowledges denials being the murderer. ng that he got them in a fight

been confined as a lunatic

## OF THE ROMANTIC SISTERS," AT LAURA

"The Seven Sisters," at Miss management the enormous may appear extravagant to splendid effects produced; but a theatre, and a glimpse even all doubt on the subject. All a matter of course, witness hibition, and judge for them- country friends, who may not ork during the run of "The artist to reproduce with his id, and we must say that he ck. In the distance are seen ere through mid air, and sur- waters of a fairy lake glis- le over its calm surface floats in glittering garments and all this hang the fairy ferns, uch of a whispering zephyr, with life; and, as a crowning down upon the bosom of the scloses a living child nestling

Miss Keene, and, in order to the fruits of her labors, she this work of her hands and

## LAW OFFICE, HOFF- NGFIELD, ILL.

to Springfield, nearly thirty ure, was elected, and served a law office under the firm of ow. This house, which still the step from thence to the on Lincoln at that time but

## LAW OFFICE, FIFTH STREET, NGFIELD, ILL.

situated in Fifth street, west nership with Mr. Herndon, ad reputation. We give a special artist. They present st step in the career of their other.

## CHRISTMAS EVE.

By Park Benjamin.

'Tis Christmas Eve. I hear the chime  
Of bells announce the holy time.  
The air grows muter as they fling  
Their soft, sweet sounds afar,  
As if, borne on an angel's wing,  
Came music from a star.

'Tis Christmas Eve. I look above  
And see, in thought, the mission'd Dove  
Descending from a silver cloud,  
With glory round his form,  
While sounds a Voice, not wild or loud—  
The Voice that hushed the storm.

That Voice comes blended with the tone,  
Which, half in mirth and half in mean,  
A gleeful requiem sings for all,  
Who, in this holy time,  
Will heed that solemn spirit-call,  
The bells' melodious chime.

Ring on, sweet bells! ye bring to earth  
Remembrance of the Saviour's birth;  
And with it dreams of love and home,  
Of innocent, calm days,  
When guarded childhood loved to roam  
In virtue's pleasant ways.

Bells, bells—sweet bells! the long ago  
Comes back while ye are chiming so.  
I sit my mother's knee before,  
I view her tearful eyes,  
And hear her, as she says, "Adore  
Thy Maker, good and wise!"

Ring on! Ye stir the soul of prayer  
Thus floating through the dusky air;  
Your music breathes a fond accord,  
As in that night of old,  
When first the heralds of the Lord  
Emanuel's coming told.

## CHANTICLEER.

### A Thanksgiving Story of the Peabody Family.

By Cornelius Mathews.

(Continued from p. 77.)

They were invited to the table, but refusing, asked permission to sit at the fire, which being granted, they took their station on either side of the hearth. The younger staggered feebly to his seat, and kept his gaze closely fixed on the other.

"He had better take something," said old Sylvester, looking towards the young man and addressing the other. "Is your young friend ill?"

"With an silent food cannot relieve, I fear," the man answered. Turning slowly at this question, the young man answered, "We may not prove fit company for such as you; and if so the event should prove, we will pass on and trouble you no farther. If every thread were dry as summer flax," he added, in a tone of deep feeling, "I, for one, am not fit to sit among honest people."

"You should not say so, my son," said old Sylvester; "let us hope that all men may on a day like this sit together; that, remembering God's many mercies to us all, in the preservation of our lives, in his blessed change of

learned the peril and the sore distress of his young friend, he tarried not a moment. "To restore peace to one injured mind," he said; "to bring back harmony to one household, is a clear and certain duty which will outweigh the vague chances of the good I may do here." The young man cherished but one wish; through storm and trial and distress of every name and hue, if he could but reach home on the day of Thanksgiving, and stand up there before his assembled kindred a vindicated man, he would be requited fully for all his toil. He took ship, in tempest, and with many risks of perishing far away unvindicated, in the middle of the wild sea.

The widowed mother could restrain herself no longer, but rushing forward, she removed the young man's hat from his brow, parted his locks, and casting herself upon his neck, gave utterance to her feelings in the affecting language of Scripture, which she had listened to in the morning: "My son was dead, and is alive again—he was lost, and is found!"

Miriam timidly grasped his offered hand, and was silent. The company had risen from the table and gathered around.

"Now," said William Peabody, "I could believe—he glad to believe all this, if he had but brought Mr. Barbary with him."

The elder stranger cast back his coat, removed his hat, and standing forth, said, "I am here, and testify to the truth, in every word, of all my young friend has declared to you."

On this declaration the Peabodys, without an exception, basted to welcome and address the returned Elbridge, and closed upon him in a solid group of affectionate acknowledgements. Old Sylvester stood looking loftily down over all from the outer edge of the circle, and while they were busiest in congratulations and well-wishes, he went forward.

"Stand back!" cried the old man, waving the company aside with outspread arms, and advancing with extended hand towards his grandson. "I have an atonement to render here, which I call you all to witness."

"I take your hand, grandfather," Elbridge interposed, "but not in acknowledgment of any wrong on your part. You have lived a hundred blameless years, and I am not the one this day to breathe a reproach for the first time on your spotless age."

Tears filled the old patriarch's eyes, and with a gentle hand he led his grandson silently to the table, to which the whole company returned, there being room for Mr. Barbary as well.

At this crisis of triumphant explanation, Mopsey, who had, under one pretext and another, evaded the bringing in of the pie to the last moment, appeared at the kitchen-door, bearing before her, with that air of extraordinary importance peculiar to the negro countenance on eventful occasions, a huge brown dish, with which she advanced to the head of the table, and with an emphatic bump, answering to the pithy speeches of warriors and statesmen at critical moments, deposited the great Thanksgiving pumpkin-pie. Looking proudly around, she simply said, "Dere!"

It was the blossom and crown of Mopsey's life the setting down and full delivery to the family of that, the greatest pumpkin-pie ever baked in that house, from the greatest pumpkin ever reared among the Peabodys in all her long backward recollection of past Thanksgivings; and her manner of setting it down was, in its most defiant form, a clincher and a challenge to all eaters and bakers of pumpkin-pies, to all cutlers and carvers, to all diners and eaters, to all friends and enemies of pumpkin-pie in the thirty or forty United States. The Brundages, too, might come and look at it if they had a mind to!

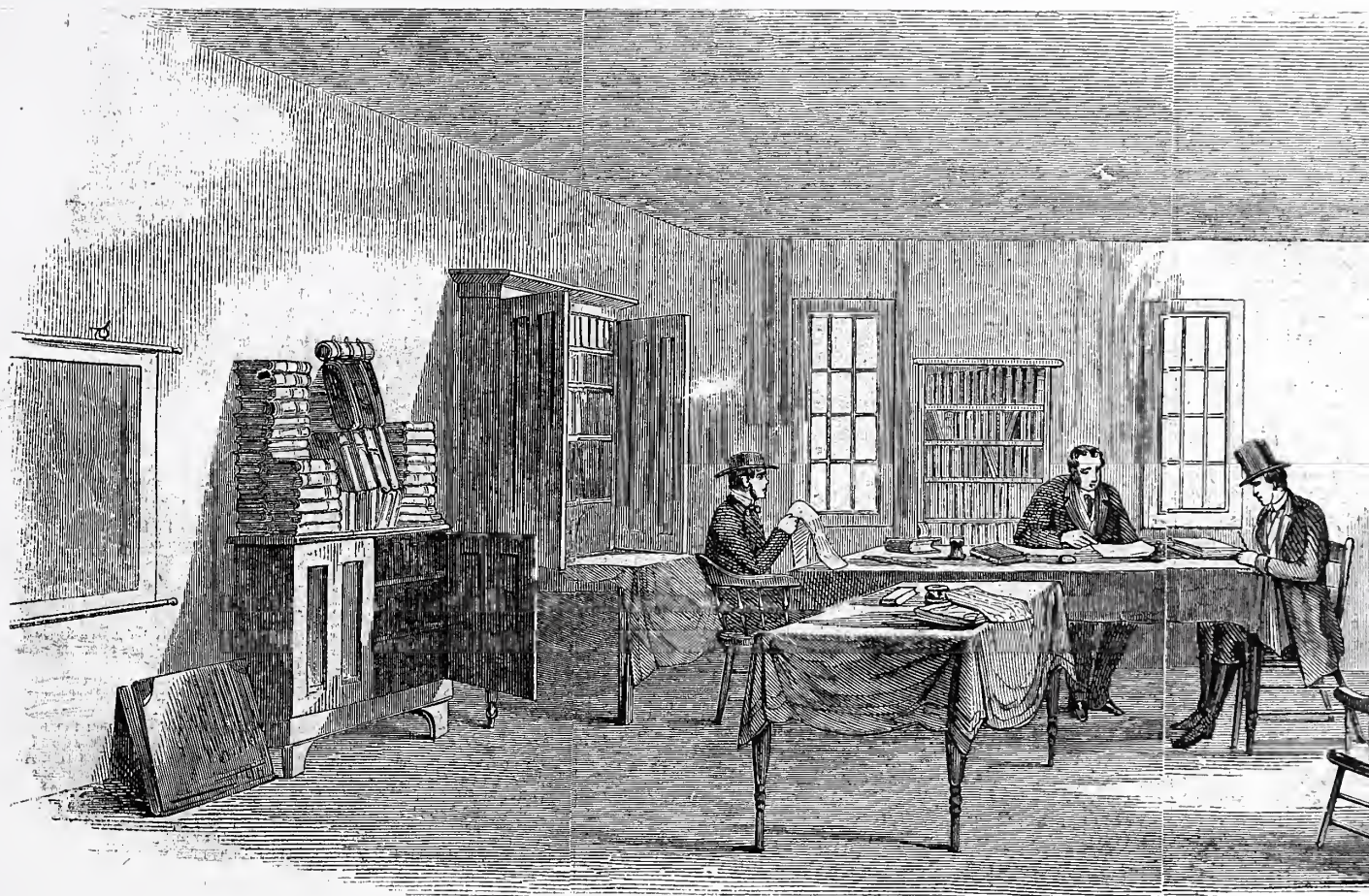
The Peabody family, familiar with the pie from earliest infancy, were struck dumb, and sat silent for the space of a minute, contemplating its vastness and beauty. Old Sylvester even, with his hundred years of pumpkin-pie experience, was staggered, and little Sam jumped up and clapped his hands in his old grandfather's arms, and struggled to stretch himself across, as if he would appropriate it, by actual possession, to himself.

The joy of the Peabodys was complete, for the lost grandson had returned, and the Thanksgiving pie was a glorious one, and if it was the largest share that was allotted to the returned Elbridge, will any one complain? And yet at times a cloud came upon the young man's brow—when dinner was passed with pleasant family talk, questionings and experiences, as they sat about the old homestead hearth, which even the playful gambols of the children, who sported about him like so many friendly spirits, could not drive away. The heart of cousin Elbridge was not in their childish freaks and fancies, as it had been in other days. The shining solitude looking in at the windows seemed to call him without.

As though it had caught something of the genial spirit that glowed within the house, the wind was laid without, and the night softened with the beauty of the rising moon. With a sadness on his brow which neither the old homes' ead nor the pure heavens cast there, Elbridge went forth into the calm night, and sitting for a while by the road beneath an ancient locust tree, where he had often read his book in the summer-times of boyhood, he communed with himself. He was happy—what mortal man could be happier?—in all his wishes come to pass: his very dreams had taken life, and proved to be realities and friends, and yet a sadness he could not drive away followed his steps. Why was this? That moment, if his voice or any honorable and sinless motion of his hand could have ordained it, he would have dismissed himself from life, and ceased to be a living partaker in the scenes about him. Even then—for happy as he was, he dreaded, in prophetic fear, the chances which beset our mortal path. The weight of mortality was heavy upon the young man's spirit.

Thinking over all the way he had passed, oh! who could answer that he, with the thronging company of busy passions and desires, could ever hope to reach an old age and never go astray? Oh, blessed is he (he thought) who can lie down in death, can close his account with this world, having safely escaped the temptations, the crimes, the trials, which make of good men even, in moments of weakness and misjudgment, the false speaker, the evil-doer, the slanderer, the coward, the hasty assailant, and (oh, dreadful, perchance!) the seeming guilty murderer himself. Strange thoughts for a prosperous lover's night, but earth is not heaven. With the sweat of anguish on his





THE PRESENT LAW OFFICE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE PRESIDENT ELECT, IN FIFTH STREET, WEST SIDE OF THE PUBLIC SQUARE, SPRINGFIELD, ILL.--FROM A SKETCH BY

#3514



# LINCOLN LORE

No. 135

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

November 9, 1931

## LINCOLN LORE

BULLETIN OF  
THE LINCOLN  
HISTORICAL  
RESEARCH  
FOUNDATION



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COMPANY

Dr. Louis A. Warren - - - Editor

### LINCOLN'S POLITICAL PARTNERSHIPS

A study of the origin and termination of Lincoln's three law partnerships at Springfield is likely to impress the observer with their political significances rather than their legal aspects. While the many local partnerships which Lincoln made with lawyers in different county seats on the circuit he travelled were formed for the primary reason of building up a clientele, the Springfield associations can be more clearly traced to political expediency. Possibly his connections with Stuart, Logan, and Herndon would be more correctly termed political partnerships.

In an autobiographical sketch written in the third person which Lincoln prepared for Scripps in 1860, he said that after the Black Hawk War, "He studied what he should do—thought of learning the blacksmith trade—thought of trying to study law—rather thought he could not succeed at that without a better education."

It was the encouragement which he received from John T. Stuart that made him decide to develop brain instead of brawn, as is set forth by Lincoln's own words as follows:

"The election of 1834 came, and he was then elected to the legislature by the highest vote cast for any candidate. Major John T. Stuart, then in full practice of the law, was also elected. During the canvass, in a private conversation he encouraged Abraham to study law. After the election he borrowed books of Stuart, took them home with him, and went at it in good earnest. He studied with nobody. He still mixed in the surveying to pay board and clothing bills. When the legislature met, the law-books were dropped, but were taken up again at the end of the session. He was re-elected again in 1836, 1838, and 1840. In the autumn of 1836, he obtained a law license, and on April 15, 1837, removed to Springfield, and commenced the practice—his old friend Stuart taking him into partnership."

*John Todd Stuart*

One is apt to think of John T. Stuart, senior member of the firm Stuart and Lincoln, as a much older man

than his former apprentice, but such is not the case. Stuart was born near Lexington, Kentucky, on November 10, 1807, just fifteen months before Lincoln's birthday.

Stuart's father was a Presbyterian clergyman who saw to it that his son had a college education, and he was graduated from Centre College in 1826 about the time Lincoln had completed his studies in the pioneer log cabin schools of Indiana.

There is a tendency to draw the conclusion from the superior training of Stuart, and the more distinguished family from which he came that he and Lincoln did not have much in common, but this does not appear to be so.

They were both born in Kentucky, both migrated to Illinois the same year, both were Whigs and interested in politics, both were officers in the Black Hawk War, both served in the Illinois legislature at the same time. One who observed their intimacy said that "socially and politically they seemed inseparable."

Although they had so much in common the one interest above all other which bound them together was politics. One of Stuart's biographies has said that "Stuart's predominating interest was politics." There is no question about Lincoln's chief ambition in life.

Stuart was the first of the Stuart and Lincoln combination to engage Stephen A. Douglas in a political contest, and defeated him in an exciting congressional campaign. Stuart's removal to Washington was largely responsible for the dissolution of this partnership with Lincoln. It might be said that both the beginning and end of the Stuart-Lincoln law firm was due directly to political influences.

Stuart was elected to Congress as a Democrat during Lincoln's administration and served as chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Lincoln Memorial Association organized shortly after Lincoln's death.

*Stephen Trigg Logan*

Lincoln's second law partner, Stephen T. Logan, was born in Franklin county, Kentucky, February 24, 1800. It will be observed that Logan was only nine years older than Lincoln. When they established their law firm in 1841, Lincoln was thirty-two and Logan, forty-one.

Lincoln already had achieved unusual success in being elected to the Illinois legislature during his early years, and this fact could not have been overlooked by Judge Logan who invited Lincoln to become associated with him. Logan had served as a commonwealth attorney in Kentucky before coming to Illinois and three years

after his arrival in Illinois was elected Judge of the first Judicial Circuit.

It must be more than a coincidence that Logan began his political career as a member of the Illinois legislature at just the time his partner Lincoln decided not to announce for another term.

There have been different reasons set forth for the culmination of this partnership, but disagreement about certain political questions may have played just as important a part as some matters of economic importance which have often been set forth as the reason for dissolution of the partnership.

As a sequel to the several political contacts of Lincoln, it is interesting to note that in 1860, Logan was a delegate at large from the state of Illinois and helped to nominate his former partner to carry the Republican banner in the national contest.

*William Henry Herndon*

Lincoln's third and last partner who was associated with him for twenty years was born in Kentucky on December 28, 1818, not more than twenty-five miles from where Abraham Lincoln himself was born. So all three of Lincoln's Springfield law partners were Kentuckians like himself and came by their political inheritance naturally.

Herndon admitted that during the early years of his association with Lincoln he was little more than an office clerk, and certainly his inadequate law training would not make him a valuable legal assistant to the firm of Lincoln and Herndon. He was, however, a valuable political ally and it is evidently his efficiency as a political secretary to Lincoln that was responsible for the long partnership.

His letters to Lincoln, and those he received in return, contain mostly references to political matters and very few are concerned with the law practice. We need only to read some of Herndon's own testimony to comprehend the topic which was the chief point of contact between Lincoln and Herndon, and that was politics.

During Lincoln's term as president this relationship still existed and while it is true that the Lincoln and Herndon contacts were maintained until the death of Lincoln it is not difficult to discover the main reason for this long-time partnership.

While it appears that Lincoln's two other partnerships were cut short largely because of political considerations it is likely that this third association was prolonged because of the junior partner's willingness to serve in the capacity of a political secretary for his chief.

# THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN ASSOCIATION

LOGAN HAY, PRESIDENT

ROBERT E. MILLER, TREASURER

PAUL M. ANGLE, SECRETARY

BENJ. P. THOMAS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY



## PURPOSES:

"To observe each anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln; to preserve and make more readily accessible the landmarks associated with his life; and actively to encourage, promote and aid the collection and dissemination of authentic information regarding all phases of his life and career."

FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

April 3, 1936

Mr. H. F. Burket  
Attorney  
Findlay, Ohio

Dear Mr. Burket:

I have your letter of March 26, but regret that I am unable to give you any information as to what became of the Lincoln and Herndon law office sign. I have never encountered anyone in Springfield who knows anything about it, nor have I seen any picture of it. If any information comes to us I shall be glad to inform you of it.

Very truly yours,

*Benjamin P. Thomas*

BPT:CBH



# LINCOLN LORE

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Number 465

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

March 7, 1938

## THE HIDDEN HERNDON

A book has recently appeared under a title which is a misnomer. It is named "The Hidden Lincoln," it should be called "The Hidden Herndon." The text does not reveal in its factual evidence characteristics of Abraham Lincoln which have been unknown to students of history, but there does emerge from its pages, an irresponsible gatherer of folklore and traditions named William Herndon. This Lincoln biographer has been accepted generally, until the publication of this book, as a careful and dependable historian but no one who tries to harmonize his conflicting and scatter-brain statements about the martyred president will have very much confidence, hereafter, in anything that he has said.

The letters which Herndon, Lincoln's law partner, wrote to friends who were anxious to secure some information about the martyred president composes more than one half of the subject matter of this book. The internal evidence in this collection of personal correspondence gives us unmistakable evidence of how Herndon's mind worked but fails to reveal, as has often been alleged, that Herndon held the only key which opened and revealed the mind of Abraham Lincoln.

Herndon had been gathering information about Lincoln but three years, as he so stated (p 57) when he wrote to Ward H. Lamon on February 26, 1869, that his records about Lincoln were "the most perfect of any living or dead man." He did make one probable exception to this statement—Boswell's Johnson (p 60). Fame must have seemed to Herndon an easy taskmaster if in three years the collecting of a few manuscripts, while still attending to his law practice, had allowed him to stand by the side of the immortal Boswell. Herndon's exalted opinion of his own superiority as the interpreter of Lincoln's motives and achievements might well be called the thesis of the book.

The exaggerated claim which Herndon made for the completeness of his collection of notes and personal impressions of Lincoln was largely a sales talk. He told Lamon that only by the use of his records could the true life of Lincoln be written and then concluded that there was fame and fortune in the records when put in the form of a biography (p 57). The sales talk brought results and on September 17, 1869, Herndon sold his entire collection of records to Lamon for \$4,000 (p 61). This was purely a mercenary deal giving Lamon the power to "sell, publish, use or dispose" of the records as he wished or willed. The American Boswell whose very life was supposed to be motivated by his love for his chief had sold out, as he put it, "horse, foot, etc" (p 60).

Previous to the sale of the manuscripts to Lamon, Herndon had delivered a series of four addresses from which excerpts had been published that aroused the ire of Lincoln's friends. Lamon had occasion to question Herndon about the lectures after acquiring the manuscript collection. Herndon replied that he had never finished the fifth lecture remarking that he was too lazy. He claimed all of the lectures were penned hurriedly and then stated: "The wonder is that I could get time to think about anything except—whiskey" (p 65). Later Herndon admitted to Weik that when he wished "to say something smart he took a toddy as exciter" (p 261).

The general impression has been, and the words of Herndon now confirm the theory, that his lectures in 1866 were delivered at a time when his mind was very much confused by too much of the "exciter." One has but to read the letter which Herndon wrote to Charles H. Hart in 1866 to confirm this opinion (p 42). Lincoln's law partner, instead of being the supposed keen analyst, gives evidence of having contributed many rambling and incoherent statements about Lincoln which have done great injustice, not only to the Lincoln family but to those who have relied upon William Herndon as a dealer in facts.

Ten years elapsed between the sale of the manuscripts to Lamon and Herndon's second attempt to accumulate information about Lincoln. During this interval only one letter written by Herndon appears. When this second installment of information began to take form, Herndon was seventy years of age and Lincoln had been dead twenty years. Herndon had made the acquaintance of Jesse W. Weik of Greencastle, Indiana, who subjected the elderly man to a long series of interviews by correspondence. The replies of Herndon to his queries constituted the chief source from which the famous three volume work known as Herndon's Lincoln was compiled and written by Mr. Weik.

On January 30, 1887, Herndon advised Weik that he had in his memory a thousand unwritten facts about Lincoln (p 228) and for the next three years he drew upon this inexhaustible mass of reminiscences for what he called factual evidence. It was a changed Lincoln, as might be expected after so long an interval, that emerged from his memory. In his early discussions, he said that Lincoln was "true to his friends, never deserting them till they deserted virtue, veracity, and integrity" (p 83) but now Lincoln becomes "a remorseless trimmer with men. They were his tools, and when they were used up, he threw them aside as old iron and took up new tools" (p 208). In the old notes, Herndon said "he never knew Lincoln to do a mean thing" (p 82), but he wrote to Weik in 1886 that "when Lincoln used a man and sucked all the uses out of him, he would throw away the thing as an old orange peeling" (p. 135). Not only did the character of Lincoln undergo a change but both his father and mother were presented in an unenviable light and in the preface of the three volume work it is stated that Lincoln came from "a stagnant putrid pool."

As the famous book neared completion through the industry of Mr. Weik, both men became very much concerned about its acceptance by the public. Herndon advised Weik that success was what they wanted and that they should do anything to achieve it "short of lying or fraud" (p 210). That the economic urge was also a fact in the producing of this second accumulation of source material cannot be doubted from the internal evidence in Herndon's correspondence.

The second section of the book, "The Hidden Lincoln," containing about 175 pages and edited by Emanuel Hertz, contains much data of value but here also one is in doubt as to just how much of the information is authentic. For instance, Herndon claimed that he had no confidence in Dennis Hanks (p 59) and that Hanks "would go out of his way a mile to lie" (p 66) yet there is a ten page interview with Dennis used as an authoritative source (p 274-283).

By far the most valuable testimony in the whole book is the statement made by Abraham Lincoln's stepmother (p 350-353). Yet it is difficult to understand why Herndon would use the testimony of his "lying" Dennis rather than Abraham's stepmother when they seemed to be in disagreement about some incident.

When the book is read through, word by word, with a pencil in hand tabulating the characteristics of Lincoln, it is quite evident that as a source book about the Emancipator, it has never been equaled for contradictions. You may find in it just the kind of a Lincoln you want to find to suit your taste. Its adaptation to the needs of the writer of fiction and how it will be used is best illustrated by one of Lincoln's own stories about the Yankee peddler whose merchandise included a pair of pants "large enough for any man, small enough for any boy." To conclude that any factual evidence in the book reveals "A Hidden Lincoln" is absurd but it most certainly does remove for all time the claim that William Herndon is an American Boswell.



# LINCOLN LORE

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## THE SENIOR PARTNER

One hundred years ago in September, 1844, Abraham Lincoln became the senior partner in a new law firm which he had established, taking in as the junior partner, William H. Herndon. Up to this time he had been associated in two other partnerships, one with John T. Stuart, and another with Stephen T. Logan.

On April 15, 1837, there appeared in the columns of the *Sangamon Journal*, the following announcement:

"The partnership heretofore existing between the undersigned, has been dissolved by mutual consent.—The business will be found in the hands of John T. Stuart.

"John T. Stuart.

"Henry E. Dummer.

"April 12, 1837."

Attorney Dummer, at the time of this announcement, was a practicing lawyer in Beardstown, and it was the place made vacant by him that Abraham Lincoln was invited to occupy.

In the same issue of the *Journal* the following professional card appeared: "JOHN T. STUART and A. LINCOLN. "ATTORNEYS and COUNSELLORS AT LAW, will practice conjointly in the Courts of this Judicial Circuit—Office No. 4, Hoffman's Row, up stairs. "Springfield, April 12, 1837."

Hoffman's Row consisting of six two-story brick store buildings, constructed in 1835, occupied an area on Fifth Street, beginning at the northwest corner of Washington and Fifth. The Stuart & Lincoln offices, accordingly, were located in the finest group of new buildings in the city.

One usually gets the impression, inasmuch as Stuart was addressed as major, and referred to by Lincoln as his "old friend," that he must have been much older than Lincoln, but such was not the case. Stuart was born near Lexington, Kentucky, November 10, 1807, so he was but fifteen months older than Lincoln. Both partners were born in Kentucky, both migrated to Illinois the same year, both were Whigs and interested in politics, both were officers in the Black Hawk War, both served in the Illinois legislature at the same time. One who observed their intimacy said that "socially and politically they seemed inseparable."

In the month of May, 1841, the Stuart & Lincoln partnership was dissolved and Lincoln became the junior partner in the firm of Logan & Lincoln. According to the newspaper, their office was on Fifth Street, opposite Hoffman's Row, however, the office was later moved to a building on the southwest corner of Sixth and Adams Streets. This was also a new building, having been constructed in 1841. The post office was located in it, and one of the Logan-Lincoln business cards noted their office was "over the Post-Office, third story."

Logan was also a Kentuckian, nine years Lincoln's senior, and contributed very much to Lincoln's advancement in the practice of law. Both Stuart and Logan were relatives of Mary Todd, with whom Lincoln had been keeping company up until January 1, 1841.

Into the Logan & Lincoln office there had come two young men to study law, one, David Logan, the son of the senior partner, and the other one, William Herndon, a son of one of Lincoln's closest political friends, Archer G. Herndon.

Mr. Logan in reviewing the partnership, stated: "Our law partnership continued perhaps three years. I then told him (Lincoln) that I wished to take in my son David with me who had meanwhile grown up, and Lincoln was perhaps by that time quite willing to begin on his own account. So we talked the matter over and dissolved the partnership amicably and in friendship."

With young Logan going into partnership with his father, naturally it left Lincoln and his protege, Herndon, thrown together. If it had been any other ambitious young man there at the time, probably he would have been given the same opportunity enjoyed by young Herndon.

One of Lincoln's contemporaries, Harvey L. Ross, has given this version of the forming of the Lincoln & Herndon law firm: "It was thought a little strange at that time that Mr. Lincoln would take into partnership so young and inexperienced a lawyer as Bill Herndon. But he had his reasons and I think I can come very near guessing some of them. Bill's father had been a friend to Lincoln for a great

many years and was a very influential man in Sangamon County. He had always helped Lincoln in every way and it was in payment for this kindness that Lincoln took his son in his office."

Whatever the reason may have been for the forming of the new law firm of Lincoln & Herndon, Lincoln was undoubtedly the senior partner, not only a senior in age by about ten years, but also in experience and ability, by a far more significant gap. The partnership consisted of Mr. Lincoln and "Billy." These were the names by which each addressed the other through the years, and it was so when Lincoln left for Washington in 1861.

Although the Lincoln & Herndon partnership was established in the autumn of 1844, it was not until December 9, 1844, that Herndon was admitted to the bar. The new firm secured offices in the Tinsly building, corner of Sixth and Adams Streets. It was also a new structure, so all of Lincoln's three partnerships were housed in new situations. Some new furniture was acquired for the office and the bill of goods bought to equip the room indicates it was not bare of furnishings.

At some time later, however, the firm moved to the more familiar location, a backroom in a three-story, brick building on the west side of the public square. Mr. Lincoln had business connections with several other lawyers on the Eighth Judiciary Circuit which in many respects were just as important as his Springfield partnership. It might be expected that Herndon, who remained in Springfield and cared for the office there would have the oversight of the routine matters such as keeping the office in a respectable condition. When public attention was called, in 1860, to the apparently neglected condition of the office, the criticism should have been placed where it belonged, on the shoulders of the irresponsible junior partner.

A small wooden sign had been placed at the entrance to the office bearing the inscription, Lincoln & Herndon. It remained there through President Lincoln's administration, and was replaced after his death with the sign Herndon & Zane. Charles S. Zane, who married a niece of Herndon's, then had the honor of being a partner in the once famous law firm, in which Lincoln had been "The Senior Partner."



## Daughter Of Lincoln's Law Partner



—State Journal Photo.

The woman pictured above is a most interested observer of the Centennial celebration now in progress in Springfield and rightly so, since she is the daughter of William H. Herndon, law partner of Abraham Lincoln for many years. She is Mrs. Mary F. Ralston, 217 South College street, youngest child of the



## Daughter Of William H. Herndon

### Mrs. Mary Ralston, 99, Dies; Rites Wednesday

Mrs. Mary F. Ralston, 99, daughter of William H. Herndon, law partner of Abraham Lincoln, died at 6:10 a. m. today at the King's Daughters home, where she had been a resident for the last nine years.

Mrs. Ralston, who was known familiarly to hundreds as "Aunt Molly" broke her hip when she was 84 years old, and though at that time not much hope was given for her recovery, she rallied and was a familiar sight at Myers Brothers and Bressmers stores, where she shopped and visited with store personnel.

Mrs. Ralston was born Oct. 8, 1856.

Surviving are one niece, Mrs. Mary Mitts, of Springfield; one nephew, Ike Herndon, of California; three grandnieces, Helen F. Dunlap, Bessie Miller and Mrs. Grace H. Bice, all of Springfield, and six grandnephews, Ralph Herndon and Jesse Herndon, both of Springfield; Houston and Harris Herndon, both of St. Louis, Mo.; Lt. Col. James N. Herndon, who is serving with the U. S. army in the Panama Canal zone, and William Herndon, of Springfield.



Mrs. Mary Ralston.

She was a member of St. Paul's cathedral.

Funeral services will be held at 10 a. m. Wednesday at St. Paul's cathedral, with Rev. David K. Montgomery officiating. Burial will be held in Oak Ridge cemetery.

Pallbearers will be D. Logan Giffin, Murray S. Hanes, Ridgely Watts, Roy A. Wentz, Ralph D. Herndon and Earl R. Bice.

The body was taken to Thomas C. Smith's Sons funeral home.

## 1 ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 2 DEATH NOTICE

**RALSTON, MRS. MARY F.**—Of King's Daughters home, died there at 6:10 a. m. Monday, May 14, 1956, age 99. Surviving are one niece, Mrs. Mary Mitts, of Springfield; one nephew, Ike Herndon, of California; three grandnieces Helen F. Dunlap, Bessie Miller and Mrs. Grace H. Bice, all of Springfield; six grandnephews, Ralph Herndon and Jesse Herndon, both of Springfield; Houston and Harris Herndon, both of St. Louis, Mo.; Lt. Col. James N. Herndon, serving with the U. S. army in the Panama Canal zone, and William Herndon, of Springfield. Remains to Thomas C. Smith's Sons funeral home. Funeral services will be held at 10 a. m. Wednesday at St. Paul's Cathedral, Rev. David K. Montgomery officiating. Burial in Oak Ridge cemetery. Friends may call at the funeral home from 3 to 9 p. m. Tuesday and until 9:30 a. m. Wednesday.







# Lincoln Lore

February, 1976

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation...Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1656

## LINCOLN HISTORIOGRAPHY: NEWS AND NOTES

*Editor's Note:* Once again enough articles and notes of interest to Lincoln students have accumulated to merit devoting most of this issue to discussing them. The last page of this issue is the "Cumulative Bibliography," and this entire issue, like Number 1647, constitutes a bibliographic tool for the student and collector.

Although pundits have been suggesting for years that the Lincoln theme is exhausted, Lincoln students still produce fresh evidence and treat old problems in refreshing ways. The variety of contributions to the Lincoln field of study lately has been great, and some of them approach Abraham Lincoln from ingenious angles. Articles have recently linked his name to people as different as Mark Twain, one of the Peabody sisters of Salem, and Giuseppe Garibaldi. The old problem of Lincoln's opposition to the Mexican War has received a refreshing treatment, and the same author has attempted to psychoanalyze the sixteenth President. Despite the already vast literature on the subject, new research requires an almost yearly reevaluation of Lincoln. We should be changing our minds about aspects of his career all the time.

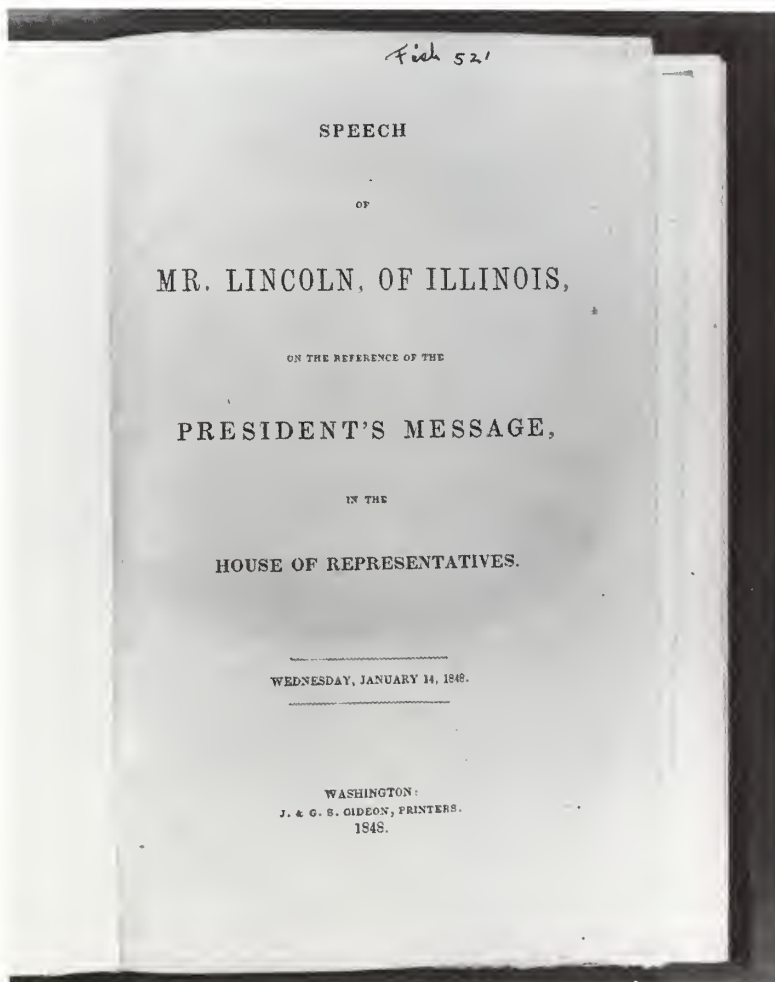
G. S. Boritt demands that we rethink our answer to "A Question of Political Suicide: Lincoln's Opposition to the Mexican War" in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, LXVII (February, 1974), 79-100. Boritt denies that Lincoln suffered a lapse from the "pragmatic" political course he characteristically pursued in his public career. William Herndon was the first to argue that Lincoln made a serious political mistake when, on January 12, 1848, he denounced the Mexican War in his first significant action as a United States Congressman. It

was a major leg of the argument of Herndon's *Abraham Lincoln: The Story of a Great Life*, which insinuated that Herndon steered his law partner from the errors of his political novitiate into the brilliant statesmanship which led to his being nominated for the Presidency twelve years later. Albert Beveridge, not only a Lincoln biographer but also a raving imperialist, made Herndon's case stick in *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858*, published in 1928. He, of course, was not happy to find that Lincoln opposed American expansion.

The evidence for the view that Lincoln thus committed political suicide is limited enough to suggest that the authors' prejudices dictated the bold

assertion. Herndon and ever-hostile Democratic newspapers were the principal witnesses against Lincoln. The circumstance that Stephen T. Logan, Lincoln's former law partner and the Whig candidate for Lincoln's seat in 1848, lost the traditionally Whig district in the next election has also counted heavily against the wisdom of Lincoln's course; historians blame his opposition to the war for the Democratic upset that followed.

The many prongs of Boritt's attack on this old saw cannot be fully recounted, but here are some of the more important points: (1) Illinois Whigs in general opposed the war, (2) the only criticism of Lincoln in the press came from Democratic newspapers, (3) the only extant piece of opposition to Lincoln's stand from a member of his district comes from Herndon, (4) Whigs rotated the seat in Lincoln's district (he did not choose not to run again for fear of losing), (5) the Whigs' next candidate, Logan, was a terrible



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation  
**FIGURE 1.** Lincoln's Mexican War speech as it was known to his friends and constituents. Only six other congressmen spent more than Lincoln on printing speeches to be sent home as pamphlets, and Lincoln spent the largest part of this sizable sum on reprinting his Mexican War address.

campaigner and guaranteed his own defeat, and (6) Lincoln spent much time campaigning for Zachary Taylor in 1848 out of his home state because of his ambition for national political fame, not because he was afraid to show his face in his own district.

In a more speculative and slightly less careful piece of work, Professor Boritt discusses "The Voyage to the Colony of Linconia: The Sixteenth President, Black Colonization, and the Defense Mechanism of Avoidance" in *The Historian*, XXXVII (August, 1975), 619-632. Here Boritt questions the depth of Lincoln's commitment to the policy of colonization by saying that Lincoln's interest in colonization was a psychological shield against facing painful external realities. Lincoln's public statements on colonization are a mass of contradictions. He occasionally ridiculed arguments that there was not room for both races on this vast continent. He spent only a small amount of the money Congress appropriated to further experiments in colonizing freedmen. His thought on the question

was uncharacteristically sloppy and ignored the sort of simple mathematical evidence from population figures and finance that he customarily loved to manipulate. These are signs of wishful thinking or unconscious avoidance of the realities of this great social question. A careless faith in colonization allowed him to devote his attention and energies to the task of freeing the slaves without worrying about future problems and without running roughshod over popular opinion among whites. It must be said that Boritt's article avoids what he so aptly calls "psychodogmatism," the clumsy assertion of borrowed psychological jargon that so mars Michael P. Rogin's recent psychobiography of Andrew Jackson (*Fathers and Children*) as to make it almost unreadable.

Boritt's article provides a sharp contrast to the program presented by Professor George M. Fredrickson to the Chicago Civil War Round Table in November, 1975. Fredrickson's published views were discussed in *Lincoln Lore*, Number 1647, and they have not changed significantly. But it is interesting to note that he sees colonization as "the perfect answer" in Lincoln's mind to the dilemmas of a man who inherited Henry Clay's views on the race question. Clay (and Lincoln), says Fredrickson, believed that racial differences were not innate but environmentally determined. Clay (and Lincoln) also believed that white prejudice was incorrigible, and racial equality was impossible as a matter of political and social fact (not as a dictate of nature's laws). Colonization was the only answer. Two more diametrically opposed views than Boritt's and Fredrickson's would be hard to imagine.

Allison R. Ensor's "The House United: Mark Twain and Henry Watterson Celebrate Lincoln's Birthday, 1901" in *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, LXXIV (Spring, 1975), 259-268, describes a notable occasion on which two former Confederate soldiers (Twain and Watterson) celebrated Lincoln's birth-



FIGURE 2. Giuseppe Garibaldi from an 1864 photograph.

From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

result, to-day we are glad that it came out as it did, but we are not ashamed that we did our endeavor..." And he celebrated the North's leader, Lincoln, as "the greatest citizen, and the noblest and best, after Washington, that this land or any other has yet produced."

"Lincoln, Stevenson And Yours Truly," by Mort R. Lewis in *Manuscripts*, XXVII (Fall, 1975), 280-284, relates an incident in which Mr. Lewis suggested to Adlai Stevenson that he and Dwight D. Eisenhower should have a series of televised debates like the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Eisenhower ignored the suggestion after it was aired on Drew Pearson's radio show. Nevertheless, Mr. Lewis and Mr. Stevenson thereafter had some correspondence. Lewis chided Stevenson's overly intellectual speech-making by quoting Lincoln's advice to Herndon, "Billy, don't shoot high — aim lower and the common people will understand you. They are the ones you want to reach..." Thereafter, several letters revealed Stevenson's warm curiosity about the sixteenth President (especially his humorous anecdotes) and the ways of separating the valid quotations from the apocrypha.

Herbert Mitgang's "Garibaldi and Lincoln" in *American Heritage*, XXVI (October, 1975), 34-39, 98-101, discusses an offer to make the Italian revolutionary hero, General Giuseppe Garibaldi, a major general of Union forces in the Civil War. An ambitious Buchanan appointee, James W. Quiggle, who was the American consul in Antwerp, made the initial contact and offer (quite without any authority from anyone to do so). Secretary of State William Seward swept Quiggle aside but sent diplomats George Perkins Marsh and Henry Shelton Sanford to negotiate with the retired veteran of wars of liberation on two continents (this time, apparently, with the President's authority). The crafty Garibaldi tried to use the invitation as leverage on King Victor Emmanuel to launch a campaign against the Papal States to unify Italy; the King replied that he would be content to see Garibaldi go to America.

day. The audience included J. P. Morgan and Andrew Carnegie; the affair was meant to raise money for Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee. President McKinley, of whom Twain was a bitter critic because of American policy in the Philippines, had been invited but did not attend. Twain, who was often critical of the South, here identified himself as a Southerner, recounting his war effort in mock-heroic style:

I had laid my plans with wisdom and foresight and if Colonel Watterson had obeyed my orders I should have succeeded in my giant undertaking. It was my intention to drive General Grant into the Pacific — if I could get transportation — and I told Colonel Watterson to surround the Eastern armies and wait till I come. But he was insubordinate... he refused to take orders from a second lieutenant — and the Union was saved.

Identifying with the South (note the use of *we* in the following), he nevertheless celebrated Northern victory: "To-day we no longer regret the re-



Then Garibaldi demanded that he be made commander-in-chief with the authority to abolish slavery; needless to say, he was turned down.

A very interesting letter describing Elizabeth Peabody's visits with President Lincoln in February, 1865, is reprinted with careful editorial notes by Arlin Turner in *The New England Quarterly*, XLVIII (March, 1975), 116-124. Miss Peabody wrote the letter to her nephew, Horace Mann, Jr. Lincoln had served in Congress with Mann's father, about whom Lincoln reminisced to Miss Peabody:

"Yes — he was very much interested in antislavery — He went into Congress because he feared the Extension of Slavery. I remember . . . —he never spoke of any other subject in Congress — and he was *reasonable*. He was not so extreme as *some* — As Wendell Phillips for instance — (and he looked up with the sweetest smile as if he did not *hate* W.P. for being *extreme* on this subject) . . . ."

Then Lincoln told Miss Peabody a most interesting piece of political history. Congressman James M. Ashley wanted as large a victory as possible for the proposed Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery. As Ashley fought for his amendment in the House in January, 1865, Lincoln was involved in the delicate negotiations with Confederate peace commissioners which would lead to the Hampton Roads Peace Conference in February.

"Twice — while the talk in Congress was going on that morning — & I was writing to Seward — notes came from the House asking me *if there were any Commissioners of Peace in Washington* — or *whether I thought they would come* — Those converts of Ashley's (to support of the Amendment) would have gone off in a tangent at the last moment had they smelt Peace. I left off writing each time — & took sheets of paper — & elaborately wrote that *as far as I knew* there were no Commissioners of peace in Washington — *nor did I think they would come*." Here he laughed — & repeated again the same words & with the same emphasis '*as far as I knew &c*' . . . [.]

Miss Peabody saw Lincoln later at a White House reception and again discussed Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison. The letter is rich in descriptions of Lincoln's mannerisms and contains too many anecdotes to retell here. Suffice it to say that it is a document well worth reading and completely understandable because of the excellent footnotes. It is a job up to the customary high standards of this distinguished historical journal.

Two noteworthy discussions of Abraham Lincoln can be found in recent books. Major L. Wilson's *Space, Time, and Freedom: The Quest for Nationality and the Irrepressible Conflict, 1815-1861* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1974) carefully describes the differences in free soil doctrine as enunciated by Lincoln, Seward, and Salmon P. Chase. Free soilers characteristically saw themselves as purifying a corrupted, but once perfect national Eden. Seward was such an optimist that he had trouble perceiving that the corruption was serious; therefore, he was tempted by Douglas's popular sovereignty doctrine and confident even in the midst of secession that the nation would survive and progress. Lincoln, by contrast, was more a pessimist who knew that even this nation could go wrong were something not done soon about slavery. He dated the national decline from the early 1850's. Chase saw the decline as beginning as early as 1790 and was the profoundest pessimist of the three.

In a thin volume entitled *Crucial American Elections* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1973), Don E. Fehrenbacher shrewdly discusses the election of 1860. He questions what a "crucial" election is. This one was "crucial" in the sense that the most cataclysmic events in American history ensued directly as a result of the election. Lincoln turned 39 percent of the popular vote into 59 percent of the electoral vote, but there was common agreement from midsummer on that he was a shoo-in. The election contest itself was not excit-

ing for the voters or candidates. Even candidate Stephen Douglas acknowledged defeat a month before the election was held. Ironically, this gave the South time to prepare for secession; a closer contest — or, rather, a contest perceived by the voters as promising to be close — might have prevented secession, at least for a time.

There is a long discussion of the Gettysburg Address in *The New Yorker* magazine for September 8, 1975, written by Mortimer J. Adler and William Gorman.

Despite the vogue of archival scholarship, most archivists know that it is more praised than practiced. Last year, however, seven students from Indianapolis Baptist High School, accompanied by their capable teacher, Miss Thekla Joiner, made the 250-mile round trip from Indianapolis to Fort Wayne in order to do research in the Lincoln Library and Museum for an essay contest sponsored by the Eisenhower Scholarship Foundation, P. O. Box 1324, Bloomington, Indiana. Two Indianapolis Baptist students, Jim Lockwood and Kim Montgomery, were among the six Indiana students awarded \$8,000 scholarships for their education at smaller, privately endowed Indiana colleges. These students are to be congratulated, their school commended for its serious approach to study, and the Eisenhower Foundation acknowledged for its contribution to education.

On May 11, 1975, Paul M. Angle died at the age of 74. In 1925, he became executive secretary of the Abraham Lincoln Association in Springfield. In 1932, he became Illinois State Historian and executive director of the Illinois State Historical Society, positions he held until 1945. For twenty years after that, Angle was director of the Chicago Historical Society. He edited many books and publications and is well known as the author of *A Shelf of Lincoln Books* and "*Here I Have Lived*": *A History of Lincoln's Springfield*.



Courtesy of Essex Institute, Salem, Mass.  
FIGURE 3. Elizabeth Palmer Peabody (1804-1894) from an oil portrait painted in 1878 by Charles Burleigh.





A Letter From  
James A. Peterson  
To His Son





A Letter From  
James A. Peterson  
To His Son

*From the Papers of  
James A. Peterson  
White Oaks Farm  
Yorkville, Illinois*





# A Letter From James A. Peterson To His Son

June 12, 1976

Dear Jim-

I have come to some conclusions about William H. Herndon. I have been amazed at writers for justifying his statements about President Lincoln's mother. I have also been surprised at the praise lavished upon him for the work he did in collecting information. My appraisal of William H. Herndon, however is restrained.

1. Herndon was a typical junior-partner lawyer.

(a) Before the advent of law schools, young men desiring to follow the law, read law in a law office. They worked as law clerks.

(b) It was before typewriters so they wrote the pleadings, documents, and other office papers by hand.

(c) In their spare time they read Blackstone and other famous authors. Periodically, they were examined by the lawyers and after the required time in the office they were certified to the courts by the lawyers and admitted to the bar.

(d) Usually, after admission to the bar, the young lawyer was taken into the firm as a junior partner. He continued his training in the office and was assigned work in proportion to his progress.

(e) For a long time his work consisted of looking up law for the senior partner, and trying cases before a justice of the peace.

Learning by experience was a slow process in a small office. In addition, clients even now are timid in entrusting their money or liberty to a young man.

2. After the death of the President, Herndon made strenuous efforts to collect stories about the Lincoln family.

3. Despite his claims, Herndon's questions to informers revealed that he knew very little about Abraham Lincoln's family history.

In a letter to Lamon, dated February 17, 1869, Herndon wrote, **"I had advantages over all other men in knowing the facts of Mr. L's life."**

4. Herndon was not a historian nor a professional writer so his excuse to publish the intimate yarns pertaining to the President's family is not valid.

5. Herndon frequently resorted to "lawyer language," for example, "the weight of the evidence," and yet he continually relied on hearsay and rumor to establish his points.

6. The form of his questions did not reflect the experience of a trial lawyer, but that of a justice of the peace court where proceedings were very informal.

Letter Herndon to Charles Friend, February 6, 1866. Louis A. Warren, *The Lincoln Kinsman*, No. 46, p. 2.

7. Every indication is that Herndon was foremost interested in selling his material for money, and the success of the publication of the material.



Letter, Herndon to Lamon, February 17, 1869, Hertz p. 57

Letter, Herndon to Hart, February 24, 1869, Hertz p. 58

Letter, Herndon to Weik, December 1, 1888 Hertz

8. Herndon wrote that he had never been in Kentucky.

*You ask  
me some questions - I never was in Ky & not along  
the line as the Ohio River, since the assassination  
of Mr. Lincoln. The Ohio R. is about 4 miles from  
Letter to Weik, February 9, 1889.*

9. The President's mother, Nancy Lincoln, came to Hardin County as Mrs. Thomas Lincoln, and not as Nancy Hanks.

10. The President's mother was not known in Hardin County as Nancy Hanks but as Nancy Lincoln.

11. The Lincolns lived in Elizabethtown a short time, and then lived on the Sinking Spring Farm near Hodgenville, and finally on the Knob Creek Farm several miles from Hodgenville.

(a) The Lincolns were married in 1806.

(b) Sarah was born in Elizabethtown in 1807.

(c) Abraham was born on the Sinking Spring Farm in 1809.

**"I was not born at Elizabethtown, but my mother's first child, a daughter, two years older than myself, and now long since deceased, was. I was born Feb. 12, 1809, near where Hogginsville now is, then in Hardin County."**

Letter, A. Lincoln to Saml Haycraft, May 28, 1860.

**“The place on Knob Creek, mentioned by Mr. Read, I remember very well; but I was not born there- As my parents have told me, I was born on Nolin very much nearer Hodgins Mill than the Knob Creek place is - My earliest recollection, however, is of the Knob Creek place-”**

Letter, A. Lincoln to Sam'l Haycraft, June 4, 1860.

(d) In 1812 Thomas Lincoln paid a doctors bill for services in connection with the infant Thomas Jr. who was born on the Knob Creek Farm.

(e) In 1816, the Lincolns moved to Indiana. Their residence in Hardin County approximated ten years.

(f) A residence in three different locations in that short period of time would not likely leave memories in adults more than forty years later.

12. In an article written in collaboration with John Locke Scripps of the Chicago Tribune, referring to his father, Abraham Lincoln said,

**“He finally settled in Hardin County, where, in 1806, he was married to Nancy Hanks, whose family had also come from Virginia.”**

(a) Mr. Lincoln was mistaken in the county where his father and mother were married. They were married in Washington County, the home of the bride.

(b) That error led to much confusion.

13. On May 28, 1860, A. Lincoln wrote Sam'l Haycraft, the County



Clerk of Hardin County as follows:

**“In the main you are right about my history. My father was Thomas Lincoln, and Mrs. Sally Johnston was his second wife-You are mistaken about my mother- her name was Nancy Hanks-”**

See Herndon's comment, Herndon to Lamon, March 6, 1870.

Rural politicians exist on their knowledge of the conditions in their area and the people in it.

If Samuel Haycraft was mistaken, it is not surprising that other people who were not engaged in politics were confused after more than forty years had passed.

14. It has been urged that Thomas Lincoln and Nancy lived on the Mill Creek Farm, and that the President was born there. Thomas Lincoln owned the Mill Creek Farm from 1803 to 1814. Thomas lived there with his mother until he married. Records of ownership do not prove residence.

15. 1807-Thomas Lincoln bought a residence lot, paid taxes to Elizabethtown, and Sarah was born in Elizabethtown.

16. After the death of the President a flurry of writers sought information about the Lincoln family. The excitement invaded Hardin County which was regarded as the home of the Lincolns. Old residents were interviewed concerning events that took place before they were born. A rash of fiction evolved.

The name of Nancy Hanks brought back recollections of stories of an active young lady named Nancy Hanks, a daughter of Joseph Hanks who lived in Nelson County not far from the Lincolns when they were living at Knob Creek.

Joseph Hanks' daughter, Nancy, gave birth to a child without benefit of clergy. The father's name was Charles Friend. The child was named Dennis Friend Hanks. The child's mother married Levi Hall. The mother turned the child over to her sister, Elizabeth Sparrow, the wife of Thomas Sparrow, to raise.

Many years had passed and the daughter of Joseph Hanks became confused with Nancy Lincoln.

17. Mr. Lincoln's statement that his father,

**“finally settled in Hardin County, where, in 1806, he was married to Nancy Hanks,--”**

produced unhappy events.

There being no marriage record in Hardin County because the wedding took place in Washington County, fed the appetites of those seeking to discredit Mr. Lincoln and gave rise to the story of illegitimacy that was circulated during the campaign.

18. Herndon failed to visit Washington County where Nancy had lived with her Aunt Rachel Berry before her marriage, and where the marriage records rested in the vaults of the court house.

Uncle Richard Berry had been a prominent man in Washington County and maintained a comfortable home with slave servants. Sarah Mitchell, another niece, lived in the Berry home at that time. She was the daughter of Robert and Naomi Shipley Mitchell.

The wedding of Nancy Hanks and Thomas Lincoln took place in the home of Richard Berry Jr. who signed the marriage bond. Thomas



Lincoln's mother lived close by.

A neighbor and friend of Nancy, Mary Litsey, made the wedding dress, and attended the wedding and later described it to Mrs. Vawter.

For a long time after the assassination Mrs. Vawter and Squire Thompson were available. It was Lamon's book that prompted Mrs. Vawter to write the press. Then she prevailed on Squire Thompson, who was the son of Sarah Mitchell, to enlist the aid of the county clerk in Springfield. Following a search the records were found.

19. Herndon failed to visit Mercer County, where he knew that Lucey Sparrow had lived with her husband, Henry Sparrow. Dennis Hanks had told Herndon about his visit to the Sparrows when a child.

Henry Sparrow Jr. was a well known religious leader and a staunch supporter of his famous nephew, Abraham Lincoln. He was living a long time after the assassination and knew the family history. Herndon never talked to him.

Mercer County was where an illegal proceeding took place involving Lucey Hanks. A presentment, not an indictment, was filed. The case was discontinued. Those records were easily available and could have precluded unfair gossip. See *In Re Lucey Hanks*.

After the Civil War there were many people living who knew Lucey Hanks and her children.

20. I have been unable to find a record of Herndon questioning Dennis Hanks about the lawsuit in Hardin County, entitled Sparrow

Heirs vs. Alexander, Circuit Court, 1825. Dennis was a witness and a participant. He was an adult at that time. That case brought him in close contact with the Sparrows, including Lucey's husband, Henry. The case lasted five years and there must have been much family talk in that time.

There has been a great deal written about William H. Herndon but I believe that his characteristics are best described by a quotation from his letter to Jesse Weik, dated February 9, 1887, in which his qualities as a lawyer, a writer, and a historian are exhibited.

**"I am glad that you are going to Kentucky in search of new facts and old ones, if true, on Lincoln. The Enloe business should be probed to the bottom, including the character of Nancy Hanks. I once saw a letter published, it was in some Kentucky paper, in which Miss Hanks was described as a cheerful, rollicking, daring, reckless "gal," breaking through all rules of propriety or forms, etc., in society, and that she became sad while in Indiana. The man is now living and in Kentucky who wrote the letter, think his "fiz" is in the Century. However, you can get lots of evidence on this ground. I was told that Ben Hardin, old Ben of Kentucky, used the "gal" when he pleased. When you are done in Kentucky, if you go there first, go into the southern part of Indiana, taking with you, if you want to, my friend Wartman of Evansville. I am going to Menard to court in March and I'll see what I can and take notes, and then write to you. I shall see Mrs. Francis, Edwards, Susan Talbott, and other people, and catch up what I can."**

**Your father,**



P.S. I suggest that you place this letter in Abraham Lincoln: Some Kentucky Background.

Your father,









# How Lincoln became Lincoln



**Gary Panetta**  
**BACKSTAGE**

Sunday, December 17, 2006

It was the first book that dared to "tell all" about Abraham Lincoln, and the book that has done the most to shape how we think of Lincoln today.

Now a new, critical edition of this classic presidential biography by Lincoln's friend and law partner, William H. Herndon, has been published, allowing readers to see how their popular conceptions of America's first martyred president came to be.

"Herndon's Lincoln" (University of Illinois Press, \$35), edited by Douglas Wilson and Rodney O. Davis of Knox College, dusts off the cobwebs from the classic 1889 account by Herndon and collaborator Jesse W. Weik. The book's careful probing into Lincoln's personal life outraged many 19th century readers. But "Herndon's Lincoln" remains a must-read for Lincoln aficionados because so much of what lies in its pages has shaped how we view Lincoln today.

"It was Herndon who gathered all the information that we know about Lincoln's boyhood - that he was a young, precocious boy who was eager to learn things, who was quick to learn how to write, who was known even as a boy as a writer, as a poet," Wilson said. "The picture of a man who educates himself - who is genial, who is likable, who draws people to him, who is courageous, who sticks up for the underdog, who is a generous man, who is not grasping or avaricious - all of these qualities that ... form our conception of Lincoln, most of these themes are found in Herndon's biography."

"What he wanted to do was to produce a biography of the complete Lincoln - warts and all," Davis said. "And so he was invading territory that was thought to be sacrosanct by critics and by the reading public in the 19th century. He was unafraid to write about Lincoln's romances. If he thought there were problems in Lincoln's marriage, he wrote about that. If he thought that Lincoln was religiously an infidel, or, at least, not a true believer, he wrote about that."

Without such details, Herndon believed, explaining how an obscure youth became such a great leader, how Abraham Lincoln became Abraham Lincoln, would be impossible.

But "Herndon's Lincoln" also is unique because it constitutes what is likely to be the first "oral history" project conducted in the United States. Instead of relying on official sources and records, Herndon sought out acquaintances and friends of Lincoln before he became president. Such people - often semi-literate and not able to leave written records - could offer firsthand testimony of what the man who would become president was like.

Herndon's efforts were roundly criticized by later generations of historians who believed the oral history approach was too fraught with error and bias to reveal much that was reliable about the young Lincoln, Davis said. But scholars today are much more open to the use of oral history, which allows historians to gain some understanding of the rich textures of social life in a way that official documents cannot. Besides, Davis said, without Herndon, Lincoln's early years would be largely blank.

Still, Herndon's account is anything but completely reliable, as Davis and Wilson try to show in their introduction and through extensive annotations. Factual errors abound in the text. So do heavily embellished quotes. Even the book's title is misleading: Herndon merely gathered information for the biography; the actual writing was left to Weik, and the two men disagreed about how to present Lincoln to the reading public. For Herndon, Lincoln was an intellectual who was interested in big issues and often neglectful of his duties as a father and a husband; Weik's Lincoln is much more accessible and likable. This latter version of Lincoln, not Herndon's, is the one finally enshrined in the book.

Historical reliability aside, "Herndon's Lincoln" remains the account that set the tone for all the biographies that

followed. As a piece of writing, it's readable and interesting as well.

"In a way, it's a conventional 19th century biography," Davis said. "But it has a grace and a kind of charm on its own."

Gary A. Panetta is the fine arts columnist and a critic for the Journal Star. He can be reached at 686-3132 or [gpanetta@pjstar.com](mailto:gpanetta@pjstar.com). Write to him at 1 News Plaza, Peoria, IL 61643.

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### Springfield Attorneys, 1859

The directory of 1859 gives the following attorneys in Springfield at that time: T. D. Ball, G. W. Besore, N. H. Broadwell, Chas. B. Brown, C. C. Brown, Campbell & Cullom, Wm. Campbell, Geo. Carpenter, W. J. Conkling, J. C. Conkling, John E. Denny, C. S. Gibson, E. B. Herndon, Charles A. Keyes, Lincoln & Herndon, Logan & Hay, T. S. Maher, J.

H. Maher, J. W. Matheny, J. A. McClermand, L. F. McCrillis, A. McWilliams, T. & J. W. Moffett, Reynolds & Gross, S. W. Robbins, Louis Rosette, J. E. Rosette, G. W. Shutt, Stuart & Edwards, J. B. White, J. W. Wallace, Chas. S. Zane.

This makes thirty-two law firms. The partnerships were as follows:

A. Campbell, Shelby M. Cullom, Campbell & Cullom.

Stephen T. Logan, Milton Hay, Logan & Hay.


John T. Stuart, Ben S. Edwards, Stuart & Edwards.

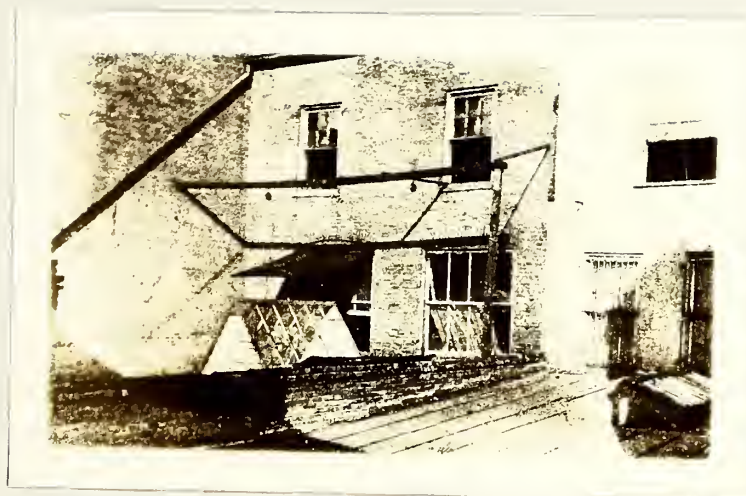
H. G. Reynolds, E. L. Gross, Reynolds & Gross.

Abraham Lincoln, W. H. Herndon, Lincoln & Herndon.

26. LAW OFFICE OF LINCOLN AND HERNDON. When Lincoln was not on the Circuit he was busy at the office of Lincoln and Herndon. For a detailed description of this room and its furniture, see Bvl.p.498. More interesting than the room were the lawyers, the law students, a clients. Sometimes, a harassed father and a young son enjoyed a meal there.

Use Newton: Lincoln and Herndon p.42





View of the 2nd floor

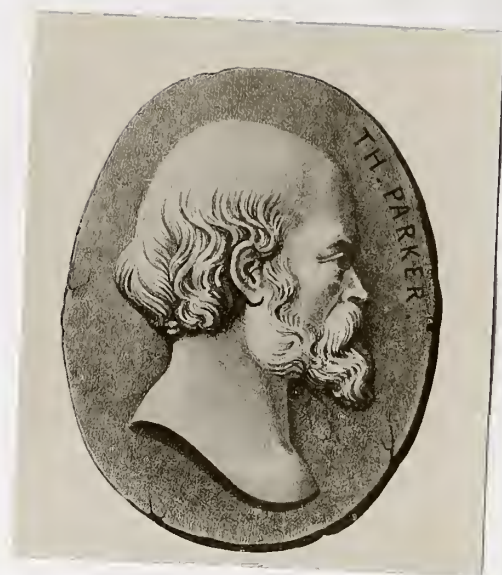


18. THEODORE PARKER, 1810-1860. WILLIAM HENRY HERNDON, 1818-1891.

Perhaps no one had more influence upon the Life of Lincoln than "Billy" Herndon, as he called him; and, perhaps, no one influenced Herndon more than Theodore Parker, famous Clergyman, reformer, and author. The relations of these men are brillianted portrayed in Lincoln and Herndon by Joseph F. Newton. Herndon studied law in the office of Logan and Lincoln and knew of their disputes. In the fall of '44, the new partnership of Lincoln and Herndon was formed. Herndon was the author of an important life of Lincoln, and both for his connection with Lincoln and his own activities merits careful study, See Bvl.p.364, and imdexes of all biographies.



WILLIAM HENRY HERNDON





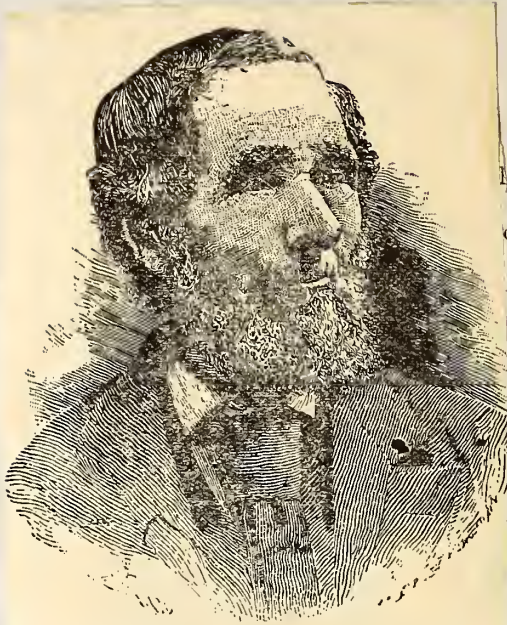
A. LINCOLN,

Attorney and Counsellor at Law

SPRINGFIELD, ILL.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

My old customers and others are no doubt aware of the terrible time I have had in  
expressing the streets, and will be glad to know that I will be back in the same old line  
which I started on or before the 1st of March next, when I will be ready to take  
threes, Discharge, Law, make jobs, Split Rails and perform other duties as I shall  
see fit.



W. H. HERNDON,  
Lincoln's Law Partner, Springfield, Ill





